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PART III (of 4)

October 3, 1962
10:30 a.m.
12:45 p.m.

Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers of
the American Republics, Washington, D. C.,
October 2-3, 1962.

See Attached List of Participants.

S/S CC DOD/ISA
S/P E
G CC IO
S/AL CC AID/EXSEC
INR/D-2 AID/AA/LA
ARA -5 AID/CAP

Ambassy SAN SALVADOR
Ambassy CARACAS
Ambassy MEXICO CITY
Ambassy LIMA
S-cc

Orig to RMR for distribution 11/9/63

The Foreign Minister of El Salvador, Hector ESCOBAR Serrano, expressed El Salvador's concern about Communist infiltration, and the psychological effect of Castro in El Salvador. The geographical situation of the Caribbean countries exposes them more to Communist infiltration, and this vulnerability, said the Minister, should be concern for all Latin America. The Minister said that he could not determine whether communism has increased or decreased since Cuba declared itself Marxist-Leninist. The Communists challenge the Salvador Government openly, visit Cuba frequently, and import weapons and funds from Cuba. The Minister noted that new decrees have been passed in El Salvador to combat Communism. But, he added, El Salvador knows that while successful, these decrees will not be enough. He declared his agreement with the Dominican Foreign Minister on the need to coordinate and increase democratic propaganda which must have strong content and must be accompanied with improvement of the social and physical lot of the people. Resources are limited, but the Alliance for Progress would be the best weapon if it were working faster, he said, adding that El Salvador is ready to support any measures to solve these problems.

Non-intervention and self-determination are important, said the Minister, but the case of Cuba, occupied by an extracontinental power is different. He expressed his concern for the plight of the

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CONFIDENTIAL

WTE-1-2

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

Cuban people. We agreed with the Guatemalan suggestion that a Meeting of Consultation should be held immediately to guarantee hemispheric peace.

The Foreign Minister of Venezuela, Marcos FALCON-BRICEÑO, reviewed Venezuela's position vis-a-vis Cuba and her position at the 8th NWM. He said that Venezuela has no trade with Cuba, even though Cuba is a natural market for Venezuelan oil. In this connection, the Minister mentioned that the Soviet Government had tried to have Venezuela barter 16% of her surplus oil to the USSR.

The Venezuelan Minister commented that through friendly Ambassadors in Cuba and "serious" Cuban exiles, Venezuela has obtained the following information:

1. Anti-Castro penetration into the Cuban army is difficult. Cuban exiles with internal contacts say that the army is controlled by foreign officers and that not even the Cubans know what is going on in the army.
2. Castro doesn't trust his own militia men.
3. Cuba has armed herself disproportionately considering her size and is not directly paying the cost of this armament. Her sugar production has decreased so that she does not have the funds to maintain her present large military apparatus.
4. Ambassadors in Habana report possible divisions between Castro and the Communists.
5. Cuba has unquestionably been for Venezuela and other countries a source of disturbances. Venezuela has no proof of Cuban arms in Venezuela but can assume that they are there. Cuba also continues a constant propaganda campaign against the Venezuelan Government.

The Government of Venezuela, stressed the Minister, believes that one of the safest bulwarks against the Communist struggle is democracy. Venezuela would prefer that a democratic reaffirmation adopted by the Foreign Ministers rather than an anti-totalitarian position. He said that communism was no problem in Venezuela before Perez Jimenez, that it flourished during the ten year dictatorship, and that now President Betancourt has inherited the situation. Falcon-Briceno noted communism opposes dictatorship and thereby gains the support of democratic groups.

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CONFIDENTIAL

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11-346

CONFIDENTIAL

-3-

Instead of persecuting the Communists, the Betancourt administration, said Falcon-Briceno, initiated agrarian reform. The Foreign Minister said that because of Cuban influence, guerrilla groups, something not seen for many years, are now operating in Venezuela. However, these guerrillas, who must depend on the peasants, have not been well received by them for they are receiving the benefits of social and agrarian reform causing the avalanche of Communist propaganda to be unsuccessful. He claimed that Castro and communism will fail to take over Venezuela.

Falcon-Briceno concluded that the strengthening of American democratic regimes with a social concern will be the weapon to give the Latin American masses confidence so that they can face any extreme left or Communist movement.

Falcon-Briceno said the statement of the Costa Rican Foreign Minister contained specific points which the Ministers should vigorously put into action. He said the impact of the Cuban regime is felt more greatly in "our" area because of its proximity to Cuba, but, the impact is felt in all America. Cuba is being helped by an ambitious imperialist power which uses unscrupulous methods to infiltrate all of the American countries.

The Minister said that the Caribbean countries should not admit publicly that they are particularly vulnerable to Castro for this frightens away investors. The Minister said that the final communique must avoid these divisions and should always talk of "American" and should reaffirm faith in the representative democratic system which is the basis of the inter-American organization. The Minister declared that he was not trying to point at any country in discussing totalitarian regimes but that twentieth century democracy must respond to the needs of the awakening masses.

The Representative of Mexico, José GOROSTIZA, said that political stability and economic progress have been achieved in Mexico as a result of the Mexican revolution and these are the most solid barriers against Communist penetration in the continent.

GOROSTIZA noted that the meeting had been called because of Soviet military intensification in Cuba, but that the Ministers had been told that this is still defensive and is not a threat to the peace of the continent.

GOROSTIZA observed that Mexican relations with Cuba are based -- as they are based with all -- on the principle of non-intervention.

CONFIDENTIAL

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CU-347

CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

Stressing that he was speaking in a hypothetical sense, he said that if Cuba should ever intervene in Mexican affairs, Mexico would "be in a position to face this situation". However, if the situation is not dangerous militarily, then politically the situation is not dangerous. Mexico recognizes, he said, that Cuba can be of concern for other countries. The Cuban problem has already become an inter-American problem. The public sources, said Gorostiza, say that Cuba is becoming a critical point in the Cold War, in which case Mexico cannot be indifferent to the question. The Mexican delegate said that there should be no problem in expressing concern because the intensified assistance to Cuba is entering the field of armaments.

The Mexican said that a press communique at the end of the meeting should reflect only a unanimous consensus.

He spoke of the practical value of maintaining diplomatic relations with Cuba. It is not necessary, he said, to evolve a list of suppositions as to how and when the situation in Cuba might become more serious. Soviet intervention in Cuba might call for a Meeting of Consultation. However, the Minister added, Mexico does not favor an early or premature Consultative Meeting which, when held, should be held strictly within the terms of the Rio Treaty.

Gorostiza indicated support for a propaganda program to counter-act Communist propaganda, but he claimed that education is the best propaganda.

Subversion, travel of young people to Cuba for indoctrination, radio propaganda and transfer of funds from Cuba, he said, are controlled in Mexico by very specific laws; therefore, Mexico must leave each country to apply its own restrictions within its own laws.

Gorostiza said that Mexico favors an appeal to all democratic countries to refrain from transporting arms to Cuba. He said that he was unable to comment on the Secretary's four points on possible U. S. action to reduce shipping to Cuba, but added that Mexico might study this question in depth on a bilateral basis.

The tenor of the remarks of some Foreign Ministers on how Cuba affected their countries, Gorostiza said, caused him to believe that this informal WFM might try to give an interpretation of paragraph three of Resolution II of the 8th WFM. He commented that he did not

CONFIDENTIAL

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"Declassified for Publication in
Foreign Relations of the United States"

CU-348

CW-115

CONFIDENTIAL

-5-

believe that this meeting could do this. If the Caribbean countries adopt a resolution for their common defense, the current informal MPM might take note of this effort in the sense that measures to be taken should be in accord with the Charter and the Rio Treaty. Gorostiza said that Mexico would accept any Caribbean resolution. Mexico would not feel free from the obligations imposed by these "instruments" presumably meaning the Charter and the Rio Treaty if faced by aggression.

Secretary Rusk at this point had distributed to the Foreign Ministers two papers: (1) "Major Cuban Exile Organizations"; and (2) "The Status of Agriculture, Industry, and Medical Services in Cuba."

The Foreign Minister of Peru, Luis Edgardo LLOSA, began a review of the Cuban situation since the 8th MPM. Any doubts which Foreign Ministers there had of Soviet influence in Cuba surely had been eliminated, said Llosa. While he agreed that the present military situation in Cuba is not a threat and that the Soviet weapons there are not of an offensive nature, he nevertheless added that the military situation can change in a short time. For that reason consideration of Cuba as a Soviet stronghold and real threat to the U.S. and the hemisphere cannot be avoided.

The Minister said that fortunately the communist threat in Peru is still relatively small. The Communists are the only group, he asserted, which cannot take part in "public affairs". While the Peruvian Government efficiently watches Communist activities there, the danger of infiltration by this well-trained group cannot be dismissed.

Llosa said he recognized that other countries are more closely affected by the proximity of Cuba. He added that he respected the opinion and the right of these countries to believe in a NATO type organization, but he could see that a NATO type organization could "conspire" against the inter-American system to which those present belong. He added his agreement that measures to fight communism should be adopted unanimously.

Llosa proposed three types of measures which, he thought, all present could accept at the present time -- before the situation becomes uncontrollable:

1. Military

CONFIDENTIAL

"Declassified for Publication in
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CU 349

CONFIDENTIAL

-6-

1. Military measures;

(a) a meeting of an Advisory Defense Committee (under Art. 44 of the Charter) to deal with urgent military matters such as studying how troops and equipment in Cuba could militarily affect Hemisphere security;

(b) the IADB reviewing and bringing its defense plans up to date in light of recent events in Cuba;

(c) keeping close vigilance over Cuban waters to check arms, as proposed by the Secretary of State.

2. Economic measures; Isolating Cuba economically, including a complete break in trade relations, (the products at present being exported to Cuba to be sold to another free world country), and the elimination of all maritime and air traffic with Cuba. The Foreign Minister suggested that the four points on shipping mentioned by Secretary Rusk should be studied carefully by the American Republics.

The Minister added that, as an additional economic measure, each country should accelerate its slow moving social development. More assistance should be requested and red tape should be eliminated to provide more economic assistance sooner.

3. Political measures; Strengthening hemisphere unity and solidarity effectively to face the common enemy.

He said that there is the need to: Implement the inter-American agreements of 1948 and 1954 to contain Communism; to halt the travel of students to Cuba for indoctrination and military subversive training; to exchange information to coordinate the fight against subversion; and to strengthen and use more effectively the SCCS.

Llosa said that after the informal meeting, the Foreign Ministers should consider the possibility of a Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers to discuss exclusively the Cuban military buildup and its Sino-Soviet links. The Minister closed his statement by stressing that Peru will support any collective action to impede the Cuban threat as well as any measures to re-establish immediately continental solidarity.

(The above conversations were carried on through interpreters.)

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14-350